

**Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary
Sanctuary Advisory Council**

**DRAFT Key Meeting Outcomes
July 18, 2008**

Channel Islands National Park Headquarters, Ventura, CA

Note: This document will be posted on line at <http://channelislands.noaa.gov/sac/minutes.html>. Audio recordings of this and other Council meetings are available upon request to michael.murray@noaa.gov.

Attendance: Fourteen of the Council's twenty-one voting seats were present. Seven seats were absent for the day: NOAA Fisheries, National Park Service, California Resources Agency, California Department of Fish and Game, California Coastal Commission, Ventura County, and Research. Public attendance varied from six to twelve people.

Administrative Business and Announcements

Several new members were announced: Jacy Ontiveros (Chumash Community seat member), Alan Salazar (Chumash Community seat alternate), CDR Jason Collins (US Coast Guard seat member), LCDR John Hennigan (US Coast Guard seat alternate).

The May 30, 2008 draft meeting notes were unanimously adopted as final, with some minor corrections pointed out.

Superintendent's Report

CINMS Superintendent Chris Mobley highlighted several items in the Superintendent's Report (provided to all SAC members and the attending public and available at <http://www.channelislands.noaa.gov/sac/super.html>).

Chris also announced the following:

- Steve Choy is on the CINMS team as an intern this summer. As a recent graduate of UCSB's Bren School of Environmental Science and Management, Steve is doing great work for CINMS with GIS tools, assisting with resource protection work, and helping out with the Advisory Council.
- Mary Grady was in attendance. She has just moved back to her California homeland after serving for two years as SAC Coordinator and Management Plan Coordinator at the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary.
- Another new CINMS summer intern is Megan McKenna, a Scripps Institution of Oceanography PhD student that many Council members may remember from a presentation she gave last year.
- Also present were colleagues from the NMFS Southwest Regional office: Peter Fischel and Joe Cordaro.
- The President's requested budget in fiscal year 2009 for the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, if adopted by Congress, would be significantly limiting for CINMS and might not allow for operation of the R/V *Shearwater*.

Council Nominations and Election of Vice Chair and Secretary

- Results of an Advisory Council election process resulted in Eric Kett being elected as Vice Chair, and Phyllis Grifman being elected as Secretary.

Council Member Announcements

A number of Council members shared announcements (unrelated to meeting agenda items). Audio recordings are available upon request.

Ship Strikes

Sean Hastings provided an overview of activities that had occurred over the past two months, and mentioned who the Council would be hearing from today.

Natalie Senyk from CINMS provided an informational presentation on recent whale observations in the Santa Barbara Channel. Natalie presented maps of whale sightings data taken from a whale watch vessel operator and from aerial overflights of the shipping lanes. The maps are available on line at: <http://channelislands.noaa.gov/>.

Megan McKenna of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography provided a presentation on how to understand the vessel

traffic patterns and vessel speeds in the Santa Barbara Channel from September through November of 2007, specifically related to the 10 knot voluntary ship slow down request made by NOAA and issued by the Coast Guard in a Local Notice to Mariners. Megan concluded that the data show that there has been no statistically significant slow down in speed during the period that the Notice has been in effect.

Peter Fischel and Joe Cordaro, representing NMFS, provided a response to the Advisory Council's previous recommendations for changes to the ship strike emergency response plan, and referred the Council to a memo (from NMFS to Chris Mobley) that was distributed at the meeting (see Attachment 1). Joe Cordaro explained the following main points about the memo: 1) NMFS has decided that their focus with regard to the emergency response plan for the Santa Barbara Channel area will be on six large whale species currently listed under the Endangered Species Act: blue, humpback, fin, sei, sperm and northern right whale (extremely rare). Gray whales are not listed and as such will not be part of the plan as implemented by NMFS. 2) NMFS has decided that an appropriate triggering point for moving from the plan's described Scenario 1 (whale season underway) to Scenario 2 (high risk conditions) will be the observation of 5 or more ESA-listed whales congregated in an area inside or within 1 nm of the shipping lanes within the Santa Barbara Channel. 3) NMFS prefers for the plan to use a three scenario approach, with Scenario 1 featuring a "please be aware" type of Local Notice to Mariners, and avoiding the premature release of a stronger Notice. 4) Joe felt that the focus should be on reducing ship strikes rather than "preventing", which is not realistic. He characterized the NMFS southwest regional office view of the 2007 ship strikes as unusual and, unless the problem were to continue, not justifying of pursuing regulations at this point.

The Council engaged in extended discussions and asked many questions of the presenters and NMFS representatives. In the end it was understood that the Council's ship strike subcommittee would move ahead with their efforts to develop a plan, including possibly a Working Group proposal, for engaging in the "phase 2" Council consideration of this issue.

Marine Protected Areas

Sean Hastings provided the Council with an overview handout about the state's Marine Life Protection Act Initiative and its southern California process. Sean noted that five SAC members had been nominated for a position on the MLPA regional stakeholder group for southern California. Questions arose about the Council's view on the existing Channel Islands MPAs being revisited, or not, during the MLPA Initiative's southern California process. It was decided that discussions on this should continue at the September SAC meeting.

Sean reported that CINMS Social Science Coordinator Chris LaFranchi will soon be convening a meeting of recreational anglers in hopes of working closely with them on a survey related to charter sportfishing and MPA effects.

Sean also reported that a publication is still forthcoming on the results of the 5-year symposium on Channel Islands MPAs. He also mentioned that a draft Memorandum of Agreement between the Department of Fish and Game and NOAA/CINMS on administration of Channel Islands MPAs is still in review.

There was discussion about the fact that recent staffing changes at the California Department of Fish and Game had resulted in Council member John Ugoretz no longer being assigned to work on MPAs.

- The Council voted in the affirmative (13 yes, 0 abstain, 0 no) on a motion to express to Chris Mobley that: 1) the Council has had a positive experience working with John Ugoretz of the California Department of Fish and Game in his role on the Channel Islands MPAs; 2) the Council would like to see that role continue; and 3) the Council would like Chris Mobley to communicate these views to the Department of Fish and Game.

Weather Buoys

Mark Jackson, Meteorologist in Charge at the NOAA Weather Service office for Oxnard/Los Angeles, provided an overview of the funding shortage situation that is resulting in NOAA needing to disestablish weather buoys located at West Santa Barbara Channel and Point Arguello. Mark explained that his office was asked to make a recommendation for relocating other buoys to help compensate for the loss of services, and he described their thinking on this. Mark asked is a

subcommittee of SAC members would consider providing advice on this proposal, and the following volunteers were named: Bruce Steele, Eric Kett, Merit McCrea, Bob Warner (absent, but nominated). The subcommittee will participate in a conference call and report back at the next SAC meeting.

Ocean Acidification

Dr. Victoria Fabry of California State University San Marcos provided a educational presentation about her work on ocean acidification. The Council engaged in questions and discussion with her. Obtaining copies of slides from Dr. Fabry's presentation requires her permission; contact her at fabry@csusm.edu.

Shiva Polefka provided an overview presentation on the Conservation Working Group's draft ocean acidification report. Following his presentation, the Council engaged in questions and discussion with him as well as Dr. Fabry. Shiva's presentation can be obtained by request from shiva@edcnet.org.

Shore to Sea Lecture Series

CINMS Education Coordinator Julie Bursek described the purpose and history of the Sanctuary and Park's join Shore to Sea public lecture series. Julie provided handouts showing the various speakers and topics that had been featured over the program's history. Julie asked for and received from Council members several good suggestions for future speakers and lecture topics.

Working Group Reports

The Conservation Working Group, Commercial Fishing Working Group, Chumash Community Working Group, and Sanctuary Education Team provided brief reports on recent meetings held.

Future Meeting Schedule

The Council was reminded of the remaining meetings and events scheduled for 2008.

- Tuesday September 16, 2008: Park/Sanctuary Volunteer Recognition Dinner (including SAC)
- Friday, September 19, 2008: SAC Meeting, Santa Barbara
- Friday, November 14, 2008: SAC Meeting, Ventura

ATTACHMENT 1

**Memo of July 17, 2008 from Tony Morton, NMFS Southwest Region Deputy Regional Administrator,
to Chris Mobley, CINMS Superintendent**